

ad

A. A. Febr. 11. 1691. 2.

Abbot George, abb. of Canterbury.

1016

Cheap-side Crosse
censured and condemned
BY
A LETTER SENT
From the Vicechancellour and
other Learned Men of the fa-
mous Vniversitie of *Oxford*,
in answer to a question propounded
by the Citizens of *London*, concern-
ing the said C R O S S E, in the
yeere 1600, in which yeer
it was beautified,

As also a remarkable passage to the same pur-
pose, in a Sermon preached to an eminent and very
great Auditory in this City of *London*: by a
very reverend, holy, and learned Di-
vine, a while after the Crosse
was last repaired, which
was Anno 1606.

2 C H R O N. 31.1.

All Israel that were present, went out to the Cities of *Indah*
and brake the Images in pieces, &c, untill they had ne-
sterly destroyed them all.

LONDON,

Printed by A. N. for I.R. and are to be sold at his
Shop in *Panls Church-yard*, 1641.

Chesapeake

A

6



Byz

142



Resolved on this question (being
propounded by the Citizens of
London, January 23. 1600) viz.

Ques. Whether the Crosse in Cheapside should
stand or be demolished.

Ans. By George Abbot, Vicechancellour
of Oxford, for the yeere above-
said, as follows.

Going to concerning the question of setting up a-
gaine the Crosse or other Crucifix in
Cheapside, I am of opinion,
First, that the godly and discreet zeal of
the worthy City is much to be cōmen-
ded, who, on just & apparent grounds making a con-
science of that which may be scandalous to many
good Christians, have not rashly nor tumultuously
proceeded therein, but are desirous to be informed by
Divines of the Universities (which are under the
protection of Almighty God, and her most Sacred
Majestie, Schools of the Prophets) what they may,
and ought to doe, both unto the honour of Gods
Name, and to the settling of such their brethren as be
in doubt.

Secondly, I am fully perswaded, that the ever-
lasting

lasting God in his wisdome hath offered unto this reverend Citie this occasion, to make tryall of their piety and devotion, whether they doe love the intire service of himselfe withall their hearts, and souls, or no, for which matter, howsoever it seeme *prima facie* to contain nothing of much moment in it, yet now, since the expectation of the whole Realme, and Church of *England* is, what will become thereof, it cannot be supposed of lesse consequence, then that either our Religion which is established according unto the Canon of the Scripture, or else that Papistry should receive a wound, and blow thereby.

Being then orderly and fairly demanded my judgment therein, I doe purpose according to the severall circumstances in their severall places, to touch divers things,

Praying that God would guide my Meditations and pen aright, to the glory of his Name, and good of their soules who desire in this matter to be resolved.

First, in these Crucifixes are resembled God the Father by an old man, the Holy Ghost by a Dove, which are both of them unlawfull in true Divinity, because God is a Spirit, and he himselfe forbids any similitude or shape of himself, when he gave the law, intending that he filleth Heaven and Earth.

Confirmed by *Origen*, who saith, we doe describe with no shape God who is without body, invisible. *Ambrose* saith, God is infinite, unmeasurable, &c.

The Heathens, and *Numa* in *Plutarchs Lives*, did forbid his people to shape out any of their Gods with the forme of a man.

And this testimony *Clemens alexandrinus* autho-
riteth.

rieth. Nay, *Thomas Aquinas* part. 3. q. 25. a. 3. But unto God who is without any body, no bodily Images could be set up, because as *Damascen* saith, it is a point of the highest folly or impiety to figure that which is divine, but because God in the new Testament is made man, he may be adored with the bodily Image of himselfe, this *Aquinas* saith.

So Christ (the Frier thinketh) in his humanity may be pictured, and not God.

Long since, some of the choicest learned *Sorbonists* directly say, they desire therefore that Images of the Trinitie should be removed from all publike and private places, because they are forbidden by the Scriptures, by Councils, by many men of excellent wort and holinessse.

This shortly I speak, but who listeth to see more, the refutation of *Bellarmino* Cavils speaking for those Superstitions, as also the judgement of the Fathers, let him read Doctor *Reynolds*, *de Idolatria*.

Being then that the Image of the Dove for the Holy Ghost was upon the Crosse in Cheapside, and the retayning thereof is unlawfull, yea, one of the highest points of Popery, whereof many learned men of their side are ashamed, I hold it a matter questionesse in a reformed Church, that the Crosse is in no sort to be set up again, as it is was before with the Dove, lest we should seem to persist in that palpable darknesse of *Egypt*.

And in this point I being undoubtedly and irrefragably resolved, in that same burdensome office of a Christian Magistrate, which now under my Lord I doe beare, did upon sound and mature advice this last Summer burn and consume with fire in the Market

ket place of Oxford, amongst others, a Picture where - in was the Image of God the Father over a Crucifix ready to receive the soul of Christ.

The next considerable matter is for the Crucifix it selfe, what is to be judged of the Image, and whether it may be retained at all.

I doe not certainly finde when the first use in that kinde was taken up amongst men, although *Conſan-tine* did cause somewhat to be made , which repreſented the two firſt Letters of Chrifts Name, as they are written in Greek , and that which hee had made was to be used only in Standards, but in this fort, and to that uſe , as now commonly is framed , if it had never been began, I think I may boldly ſay, that the Church had been freed of a great deal of Superftition , which afterwards grew to little leſſe then blaſphemey.

It is very likely that they that firſt uſed it had this to ſay for it, that there might be an Historicall uſe to put us in mind of him that died for us , and in as much as ſenſible and viſible things do much affe&t us, this memoriall might stir our devotion to remember him, by whose ſtripes we are healed.

Now as this may be the only uſe thereof , much may be diſputed, and held not to be *ſimpliciter malum*, absolutely evill: So in my opinion, there are far more repugnant , and dire&t reasons which may make a- gainſt it altogether, as

First, the wiſdome of God, which directed us to all things fit for our ſalvation , hath given not the leaſt touch nor ſemblance , directly or by confe- quence, of any ſuch matter, which might ſerve to di- rect us unto Piety : but hath only appointed the

Word

Word to be the measure thereof, and the Sacra-
ments which are visibly (but not so grossly as the
Crucifix) presented unto us as resemblances of
Christs passion.

Secondly, it implyeth great weakness of faith
when we cannot think of our Saviour, either by Me-
ditation, or Prayer, or reading, or hearing the word,
or by receiving of the Sacraments, but wee must flic
unto such means, as for the use whereof wee have no
warrant, but on the other fide there is much danger,
lest inconveniences should grow thereby.

It was a true observation of *Philo Judæus*, that the
minds of women are the weaker, and they can pre-
serve nothing but that which is sensible, speaking of
Images which they desire, but note hee ascribeth it
unto weaknesse in them.

Thirdly, it was a very ready way unto Superstition,
which from a small beginning creepeth on, nei-
ther hath it any way more increase then in Images,
as the Church by lamentable experience hath too
too much proved. Images (saith *Cyprian*) at first were
made in honour of them that were dead, but after-
wards they became sacred to their posterity, & were
at first taken only for comforts, this was true among
the Heathen, and so it was among the Christians,
who at first made them, but offered not to bring
them into Churches, yet within a while that also was
attempted, but to the great griefe and indignation of
the godly.

Epiphanius comming into a Church, and seeing
a veile or hanging that had one of the Pictures of
Christ or some Saint, tore it, as being in the Church
contrary unto the Scriptures, and after in stead there-
of

of he sent a new veile thither , but that which was then so resisted by *Epiphanius*, did in processe of time (as the purity of the Professours of the Gospel decayed) grow stronger, so that by the time of *Gregory the Great*, Images grew to be ordinary in Churches, yet notwithstanding hee that was so earnest for the having them,could not like that they should be worshipped, but even then there were that repugned the opinion of receiving of them into Churches, and so defaced the Images themselves.

Gregory disliked the worshipping of them , but those that came after him they mayntained the Adoration and worship given unto them, appeareth by the second Councill of *Nice*, among many , no doubt , this of Christ hanging upon the Crosse was one of the principall, whereby Superstition went so far , as that it was and is mayntained that the reverence and adoration due unto God himselfe (called *Latria*) is to be given to the resemblance of Christ on the Crosse, which is directly laid down by *Thomas Aquinas*, yea, and practised in their *Mssall*.

The perpetuall use of their adoration, may be gathered by their Roods in Churches , Crucifix s in windowes, the same also in their Service Books, and on the backsides of them , where *Mary* and *John* stand by Christ , by the like in Rings now growne a fashion,besides in stones and metals , before which many of them doe say a large part of their devotions, yea, the most superstitious Papists are ready to give veneration thereunto , wheresoever they see it solemnly set up.

I remember in that Colledge where I first lived,

a young man was taken praying and beating his brest before a Crucifix in a window, which caused the Masters and Fellows to pull it down, and set up other glasse. Which example makes me nothing doubt but that the Cross in Cheapside hath many in the twilight and morning early which doe reverence before it.

Besides *Campion*, whose act is famous, or rather infamous for it, and I am informed, that so much hath been signified by the neighbours, or inquest making presentments, concerning the circumstances of this cause. By all which I do conclude, that it is a Monumēnt of their Superstition, a great inducement, and may be a ready way unto Idolatry, and that there can be no tolerable use of this matter, which may be able for to countervail the dangers and obloquie arising upon the reteyning of it, and so much the rather, because it is perceived, that many evill affected men doe make their advantage from hence to insinuate into the minds of their credulous hearers, that it is a token of the returne of their faith againe into this Land, since their Monuments are not extinguished in the chiefeſt street of our greatest City.

Upon which considerations I make no doubt but the religious Magistrates are sufficiently warranted by the Word of God to remove it away, for the Scriptures have laid before our eyes what ought to be done to remaynders of Idolatry, Yea shall overthrow their Altars, Pillars, graven Images, &c.

But the deeds of *Hezekiah* being well looked into doth put it out of all controversie, for when hee saw the foule abuse of the brazen Serpent, hee caused it to be defaced, and yet it hath other manner of warrant for it then this, it being commanded by God, e-

feeted by Moses, a figure of Christ, in divers of which most materiall circumstances this Crucifix is most defective.

Divers learned Ministers then living do report. Though the judgement of both Universities was consulted with about the Croſſe, and both desired it might be taken down, yet they could not pre-vaile with B. Bancroft, but he would have it re-edified, onely with much adoe they o-verswayed the Bishop to leave off the picture of Christ on the Croſſe, that was set on the top of it.

Take notice of the blinde zeale of the Prelate in this busynesse.

And here I pray the Reader to obſerve, that I ſay the Magistrates are to redreſſe ſuch enormities, for I doe not permit inferiour men to run headlong about ſuch means, and to rend, breake, and teare as well within as without the Churches, which was that that Lusher reprehended, but the advice and conſent of Superior powers is to be had herein, that all things may be done decently and in order. In which reſpe& I hold it neceſſary that the Bishop of Camerbury, and the Bishop of London be ſought unto, who doubtleſſe upon the sober intention of the Gouvernours of that City will be pleased religiouſly and gravely, according unto their maniſtold wiſdome which God hath given unto them, to looke into the matter, & give iſtructions what is fitteſt to be done.

Here Maſter Vicechancellour at large proverbe that hit was but omission in our firſt Reformers, and that our further reformation would not condemne or checke them, but commend, the preſent due occaſion being offered, that it would be as the fact of Theodosius and Josias, that the further they went the more they did ſtill raze remouers of Idolatry, and eſtabliſhed Gods true ſervice, then be ſaith, Man hath not ſought for this opportunity, but God hath rather put it upon the Cittie, in as much as the Crucifix being worne ouer time was ready to fall, there was a neceſſity imposed for taking it down.

Now it is a greater matter to re-edifie a ſcandalous thing then to coninue it, in as much as the one imployeth a winking connivance or permifſion only, but the other intendeth an al-lowance and ratification, which giveith greater advantage to the adversary.

This

This be confirmed by Marcus Bishop of Arethuse in Constantines time the Great, and Julianus persecuted him after that he refused contribution to the rebuilding of overthowne Idols Temples , Saying, that it was ungodly to afford one halfe-penny to a wicked maker thereto.

And out of that Author he citeh one more example of Nudas a Persian Bishop, pulling downe a Pyren or Temple dedicated to the fire the Persians god , and refusing to build it again at Isdigerdes the Kings command.

Theodorets saying of him , I doe admire him, and thinkē him worthy of a garland, for in my opinion it is equall impiecy to adore the fire, and to build a Temple to it.

My advice therefore and judgement in the name of God is, that the Crucifix should not be erected there, but that upon this opportunitie advantage should be taken to give superstition a further blow , which will be very joyous to all that are already sincerely affected, and if there be any who truly love the Gospel , and are not yet so fully perswaded in this point , they also will in mildnesse yield to reason , if the Superiorour power shall be pleased to give countenance to this deed of the City.

But if it should be misliked of hollow-heated Papists , or maligned by professed Recusants, it must be expected and not wondred at.

Now if it shall be demanded what should be set up instead of the other Monument. I thinke best to be some Pyramis or matter of meere beauty , and not any Angell or such like whatsoever , for although in truth that deservert no reprehension, yet by avoyding of that the mouthes of the Adversaries may be stopped, who would otherwise storne and say, that the Creator

is taken down, and such a Creature is set up in the place where hee stood; and whereas it is said, that evermore it will be called the Crosse in Cheap side, yet it may be possible that time may weare out the appellation, or if it doe not, the name shall hurt no more then the name of *Christus* or *Candlemas* doth, from which a godly man may make that use as to prayse the Lord, that the matter of these Superstitiōns are removed, and the name onely remaynes as a memoriall of Gods goodness, who hath done so great good things for us. And by reason of the sicknesse and weaknesse of him who more learnedly and judiciously might have resolved this point, have I not after that hot and hasty humour of some men who are moved rather by fancie then reason, but after Christian and settled looking into the cause, and satisfying of my owne conscience, fully therein set down my judgement upon the demand proposed unto me, supposing that this shall also give access unto the honour of God, her Majesty, the Church of *England*, and that noble Citie, if it be so set up again as a matter of meere beauty or Pyramide.

But referring the direction, execution, and compleating of all to those honourable personages unto whom under our sacred Sovereigne the Lord hath committed the ordering of such affairs. God Almighty blesse us, that wee may still go forward in true Religion, and his holy Spirit direct our thoughts, words and actions, to the honour of his holy Name. AMEN.

George Abbot,

Vicechancellour,

An. 1600.

*The approbation of Master Vicechancellor's Letter, by
five other learned men, then heads of the
Universitie.*

WE doe approve as sound and true, the rather because bee followeth that which was done wth the brazen Serpent after that it was superstitiously worshipped by the people, and wth that the materiall Crosse, now it hath been superstitiously adored, and is mayntained by *Mari*, in a Booke dedicated unto her Majesty, and by all the Jesuits and Seminary Priests and all their Scholers this day in *England*, to be worshipped and adored, be not tumultuously taken away, but in the same manner the brazen Serpent was by consent and authority of our gracious *Hezekiabs*, & them whom canes Ecclesiasticall have authorized under her Highnesse.

This only wee adde, that as the example of *Hezekiah* be notably and sufficient to encourage her Majesty and such as be in authority under her zealously to remove such occasions of Idolatry, and to remove them out of the peoples way, for the example of *Gideon* is terrible if they be l'er alone, and continued still.

Hee erected an *Ephod* in *Ophra* after his victory over the *Midianites*, both to testifie his thankfulness unto the true God of *Israel*, for his victory obtained, and also to shew the *Midianites*, that the God whose service in an *Ephod* without Idoll or Image they did refuse had given unto them the overthrow, and thus farre *Gideon* is not reproved, but when hee grew old and knew that the people did worship before the *Ephod*, because he would not pull it downe, nor take it away, his posterity was grievously punished after him, and the people became enthrallled unto their enemies.

In like manner as the first of Chasmonai, stepping into
the temple in making signe of the Cross
in *Rome*, was commendable, because hee testified his
thankfulness to Christ crucified for the victory atchie-
ved, and also it openly shewed unto the Heathen and
Gentiles, who fought against him, that hee whom they
so much despised because hee was crucified gave him
victory. But now this outward and materiall signe of
the Crosse hath been, and is abused to Idolatry and Su-
perstition, therefore if the chief Magistrates erect such
things now, when they be well taken away, and if they
pull them not downe, when with peace and quietnesse
they may be removed, they leave unto the godly a
fearefull expectation, as of that which came to passe
In *Israel*, after the days of faithfull *Oidion*, for so we call
him notwithstanding his grievous fault, for so hee is na-
med. But the danger of such negligence is most
carefully to be avoided.

From the Universitie of Oxenford,
January the 23. 1600.

This Letter is in the hand of a Merchant of good
credit in this Citie thus subscribed.

Thomas Thornton. John Reinolds.

Leonard Tailor. Henry Ayray.

R. Kettley.

You have heard learnedly proved from Antiquity
the unlawfulness of this Crosse.

Here follow some arguments from Scripture against
Cheap-side Crosse, as they were preached in Lombard
Street.

This worthy Minister preaching on Esay 10. Vers. 5,6. Shews divers signes of Gods wrath against a Nation, among others hee shews this to be one Plague token.

When God gives over a Land to hainous sins, when her suffers a Land that hath beene delivered from Idolatry, againe to bee given up unto Idols. This is a certaine signe of Gods wrath against a Land.

For this is a standing rule, that when any Idol is suffered to bee in a Land, though it be not worshipped, yet it is a remarkable signe, that they are a people of his wrath. See what the Lord saith, Psal 81. 8,9. Hearke, my people, and I will tellis unto thee, o Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me, there shall no strange god bee in thee, neithee shall thou worship any strange god. (Mark) he doth not only say thou shalt worship no strange god, but there shall be no strange god in thee, as the Lord commands them, Exod 34.12. saying, Take heed to thy self, that thou make no covenant with the inhabitants of the Land, whether thou goest, lest they be cause of ruine among you: but yet shall overthrow their Altars, and break their Images in pieces, and cut downe their groves, for thou shalt bow downe to no other god, because the Lord whose name is Jehovah is a jealous God. For when ever Idols goe before, then certainly warre will follow after, and therefore to suffer an Idol to be in a Land, although unworshipped is no small sin, as the Lord saith, Hos. 6.10. I have seen vileny in the house of Israel, where is whoredome in Ephraim, Israel is joyned to Idols, let her alone, &c.

Thus we see how greatly we provoke God to anger, when we suffer an Idol to be among us.

And though the Lord had formerly freed this Land from Idolatry, Are not the Images of Baal againe re-edified among us? this never went before, but a Plague came after it. For by this, if by any thing, a Land breaks covenant, nay, goes about to breake their Marriage bond with God. Therefore may I say to this Land, nay, to you of this Citie, (to goe no further into other places,) where the Word of God is most powerfully preached among you, that you are in an especially manner guilty of this lowd crying sin, Witness the Crofle in Cheap-side, that is lately beautified by you. I am troubled to think how God expressly hath beene provoked, and wrathfull curse will be poured out upon you for this same golden Crofle. For whereas the Lord saith, Isaian 30. 22,23. If that despite the coverings of your graven Images of silver, and the ornaments of gold, or other Images of gold, and cast them away as a mens vugous cloth: and then shall he give you a great blessing. You on the other side, have adorned the covering of your Images: now, all men know that the Crofle is that which the Papists make an Idol of: and yet you have not staineed the covering therof but have beautified and adorned it. So that as a blessing came on them that stained the covering of their Images; so a curse will most certainly follow the beautifying of the covering of those Images of that

that Crosse. For it is that which doth become a snare unto the ignorant people : As Gideon made an *Ephod* of gold, and put it in his City, Judges 8:27. and all Israel went thither, & whoring after it, which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house: And seeing Papists will worship a Crosse at Rome, surely they will then worship it also in Eng-land, and your selves know also what respect hath been shewed to this Crosse, by Popishly affected amongst us. Besides the beautifying of this Crosse, was a lauishing of your gold: And though you lavished it not on it, as on an Idol, but as an ornament, yet it being an Idol, your gold was lavished on it, as on an Idol. O, this Crosse, is one of the Jewels of the Whore of Rome, & its left and kept here as a Love-token, And gives them hope, one day, that they shall enjoy it; and us again. Therefore this is one of the speciall plague tokens of Gods anger, and it shews this Land in generall, nay, this City in particular, to be a people God is angry with.

What this Reverend man feared then, and was much troubled at in his owne spirit, (as he often exprestions yet, in the memory of his familiar friends testifid) namely, that the wrath and judgements of God shortly would fall down upon this Kingdom and City; we have found, and with sad hearts have cause to acknowledge, having felte the smart of it not only in this the great decay of trade which haue occasioned the sinking of many chief Citizens amongst us, but that which is more then either our trades or lives, the great decay of the Gospel, the falthfull Preachers thereof being hunted out from amongst us. And this religious pious man, a *lelfed light*, was enforced in the midst of his dayes to breath his last in a strange Land.

If more Arguments in this kind are desired, you may read at large a new Treatise of Master Gurney against Images, extracted out of the Homilies.

There is not such a superstitious Monument in Spain, France, no nor in Rome, nor in any part of the Christian World as this Crosse is, as Travellers report: & that we should gild it, & Papists adore it on their knees, (as many witnesses testifie) is abominable, wee doubtnot but our Worthies in the Honorable Houses of Parliament will take away the memory of it.

